

"It took time to get over the shock of shooting a grizzly that had mauled two surveyors!"

John Pex, BLM surveyor.

July 26, 1985

Volunteer Tied To Unalakleet Fish Count, Hook, Line and Sinker

by Joette Storm

Elizabeth Steward is having the time of her life this summer living on the Unalakleet River counting fish. That may not sound exciting to most of us; but to the Ohio born senior from Lake Superior State College, it's a dream come true.

"My mother lived in Alaska as a young girl and would tell me stories about it," she says. "I've always wanted to come here."

So Elizabeth, who is studying fisheries and wildlife management, decided to work as a volunteer for a natural resource agency in Alaska to gain experience in her field and see the Greatland firsthand. Her days on the Unalakleet National Wild and Scenic River in northwest Alaska will be filled with trips up and down the river conducting a creel survey for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game as well as other studies for the BLM.

Working under Mike Scott, ADO fisheries biologist, Steward will map spawning areas, record subsistence and recreation data, and collect hydrological information as well. She will participate in a statewide study of char, which involves sampling

Unalakleet fish and comparing them with those in the Tiekol River.

Previously, Steward's work has been in the Ohio River valley and West Virginia where fisheries and water resource management have taken on new importance in recent years. "I love being around water anyway," says Steward, who feels her future career may be a blend of resource management and public education.

The Unalakleet project will give her plenty of experience in the realm of public relations, for she will be interviewing fishermen several hours a day from June through August.

In taking a count of the fish caught, their size and type, Steward will be assisting the Department of Fish and Game in assessing the size and characteristics of the river's fishery. She will be meeting lots of Native Alaskans and learning about their subsistence habits as well. In addition, Steward will be gathering data for a paper which she will submit as part of the senior seminar she is participating in at school.

With the long days there may also be time for the easygoing volunteer to sample a bit of the fishing herself and perhaps perfect the art of panfrying grayling.



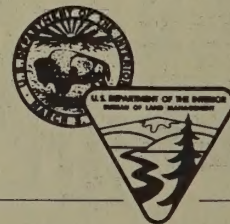
Elizabeth Steward, volunteer fisheries biologist, shows off her first catch of the year on the Unalakleet River. She will be conducting studies of river use along the National Wild River.



Mike Scott copes with unusually high water in the Unalakleet River while conducting hydrology studies as part of an ongoing inventory of the "wild" river's resources.

ALASKA PEOPLE is published monthly for the employees of the Bureau of Land Management and distributed statewide. It is produced by the Public Affairs Staff, Alaska State Office, 701 C Street, Box 13, Anchorage, Alaska 99513. Phone (907) 271-5555.

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Grisly Attack On BLM Surveyors



John Pex (at podium) describes his crew's encounter with a grizzly to Anchorage area media during a recent press conference.

On Wednesday afternoon July 24, a crew of three surveyors from BLM's Lake Iliamna survey camp were attacked by a bear. The surveyors had finished work for the day and were walking through extremely dense underbrush to get to the helicopter.

Approximately 300 feet from the helicopter they were to fly back to camp in, the trio accidentally encountered a grizzly sow who was guarding her two yearling cubs.

The sow attacked Kyle Scholl (22), a cooperative education student from the University of Southern Colorado in Pueblo, knocked him to the ground, and mauled his leg. The grizzly tried to chew Scholl's head but failed to do serious damage because of the backpack and heavy survey equipment Scholl was wearing.

The grizzly then turned to Dianne Nelson (31), a seasonal member of the survey team, mauling her lower extremities and giving her a skull fracture with severe lacerations to the scalp. Nelson lives in Fairbanks, Alaska.

The survey party chief, John Pex (25), a fulltime BLM employee, was following Nelson and Scholl. He fired at the head of the grizzly with his 30.06 rifle, knocking her away from Nelson and to the ground.

The bear then attacked Pex who shot her a second time in the neck. The grizzly was a scant five feet away before he could fire the fatal shot.

With the help of cooperative education surveyors Brent Jones and Kent Foster and the helicopter pilot, Bob Campbell, Nelson and Scholl were flown to King Salmon and from there medivaced to Providence Hospital in Anchorage. At press time both are recovering and have been released from the hospital.

They Call It Being A Hero

It took some time... and a few beers for John Pex to shake the shock of shooting a full grown grizzly sow that had badly mauled two members of his survey crew.

"It was an awful thing," Pex related to members of the media at a special press conference July 26 in the Federal Building. "The sow and her two yearling cubs just appeared out of nowhere. She 'woofed' at her cubs, they took off, and she went straight for Kyle (Kyle Scholl, a co-op student from Colorado) and got him down.

"I heard Dianne (Dianne Nelson, a temporary employee from Fairbanks) scream, and that's when the grizzly dropped Kyle and went directly for her.

"I pumped one or two shots into the air to try to scare the bear, but it didn't do any good. Then I leveled off a shot directly at her through the underbrush.

"I figured that if I accidentally hit Dianne, it wouldn't have been as bad as having that big grizzly chew on her," he said.

John doesn't know whether that first shot through the heavy undergrowth actually hit the bear or not. "All I know is that she dropped Dianne and started steamrolling toward me!"

John snapped off a shot at the bear's head when she was about fifteen feet away from him. It knocked her down, but she was back up and at him in less time than it takes to think about it.

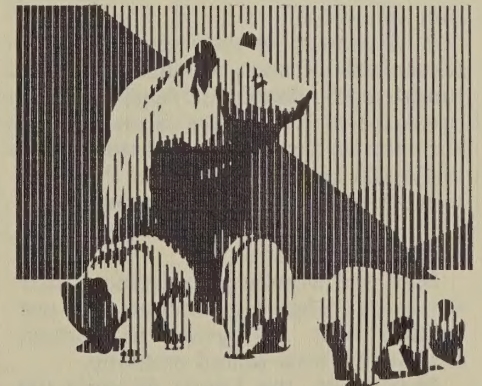
"My last shot was one to the neck when she was roughly five feet from me. That did it."

The 30.06 slug slammed the grizzly down a short slope. She didn't move again.

"That was literally my last shot! I was out of ammunition. If she had come at me one more time, I'd be in the hospital with Dianne and Kyle right now... or worse!"

After the press conference Mike Penfold, BLM Alaska state director, took John Pex aside and offered his thanks for the cool-headed way he dispatched the bear and more than likely saved the lives of Dianne and Kyle.

There's no set rule as to how a hero should look. They come in all sizes, shapes, colors, and descriptions. We can describe one hero, however. He's medium height, slender of build, about 25 years old, and has a full-blown red beard. He's a BLM cadastral surveyor. Name's John Pex.



Lower 48 Fires Steal The Thunder



AFS firefighters on their way to fires in the Lower 48

by Sharon Wilson

The empty hallways echo, an occasional figure scurries furtively through the offices keeping faith with day-to-day support activities, and dust settles on empty desks. Outside, dark clouds pelt the windows with gusting rain...once again.

It all started in the "spring" of '85, when tons of snow remained on the tundra and hillsides of Alaska. Late breakups don't always signal a wet summer; wildfires often devastate parts of Alaska by late June. But this year was different. This year the rains came. Rains drizzled, showered, and thundered day after day.

Men and women who dedicate their summers to fighting wildfires, who are trained over the years to contain destructive fires waited patiently.

Meanwhile, the Lower 48 stole the thunder—literally. With hot, dry

temperatures and a higher concentration of people, the western states soon found they had more natural and man-caused fires than they could cope with. The call came out, "send troops and equipment from Alaska."

The first group tapped included the Midnight Sun and Chena Hot Shot crews. Forty crew members excitedly packed their gear for their first major fire, then waited impatiently through last-minute briefings before boarding the 727 sent to ferry them to the Boise Interagency Fire Center (BIFC). Fire destinations were unknown, but the crews were eager to take on any assignments given by BIFC.

Accompanying them on the long trip were the more seasoned smokejumpers. Standing aside in relaxed groups looking more like they were headed for

a day at the beach, they took the assignment nonchalantly, covering up their excitement at finally being able to do the thing they had spent so many hours and years training for—fighting fire. Twenty of the smokejumpers were to be dropped at the base in Missoula, Mont., and the other 10 were headed for McCall, Idaho.

As the long-awaited moment neared, long lines of yellow-shirted Hot Shot crew members filed on board the waiting 727, followed by the jumpers, dispatchers, and overhead team

More than 900 trained suppression and overhead personnel had departed Fairbanks for the Lower 48.

participants. The warehouse crews and other support services staff loaded tons of personal gear and fire cargo into the belly of the plane; and the silver wings faded into the late afternoon sun, just as the rains descended again.

By July 11 that first trickle had turned into a waterfall of fire suppression people and equipment gushing out of Alaska. More than 900 trained suppression and overhead personnel had departed Fairbanks for the Lower 48. This nearly doubled the figure of 675 personnel who were sent south in 1970.

Native crews from 37 villages from throughout Alaska had arrived in Fairbanks for transportation to fire command centers, and 20 more crews were ordered to stand by. Additionally, more than 200 tons of powdered retardant and 130,000 lbs of a variety of fire suppression equipment were shipped on military and civilian aircraft.

Native crews from 37 villages from throughout Alaska had arrived in Fairbanks for transportation to fire command centers, and 20 more crews were ordered to stand by. Additionally, more than 200 tons of powdered retardant and 130,000 lbs. of a wide variety of fire suppression equipment were shipped on military and civilian aircraft.

Alaska Fire Service and the State Department of Natural Resources/Division of Forestry joined forces in this crisis in supplying firefighting tools, retardant, aircraft and personnel. State and federal fire agency managers stated that although Alaska had been called on before to support wildfires in the Lower 48, it had never reached this intensity of effort. Since most of the Alaskan resources were not being used, they were available to other parts of the country. However, if a fire were to occur in Alaska at this point, both state and federal fire agencies have held enough equipment and personnel to respond.

Under the National Interagency Incident Management System (NIIMS) implemented in Alaska this year, fire training, equipment, and the structure of the fire suppression organization has been standardized nationwide to realize more benefit from increasingly limited resources. This is the first time AFS personnel have been involved in the NIIMS program on a fire situation of this magnitude.

Those who are left at AFS in Fairbanks are confident that the overhead teams from Alaska are already organized into working groups that function efficiently and have the ability and skills to step right into any fire situation. At last, all that extensive training is being put to good use.

The Saga Of The Single- Celled Organism

by Joette Storm

Once upon a time, long ago in the place we now call the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, lived some tiny single-celled organisms. These little creatures secreted hard shells to protect themselves from the environment. Some of them, called planktonic foraminifera, lived suspended in the ocean; and others, called benthonic foraminifera, lived below the ocean on various types of substrate from mud to hard sands.

Today, thousands of years later, the fossils of these creatures are providing information on the earth's history to geologists searching for oil and gas.

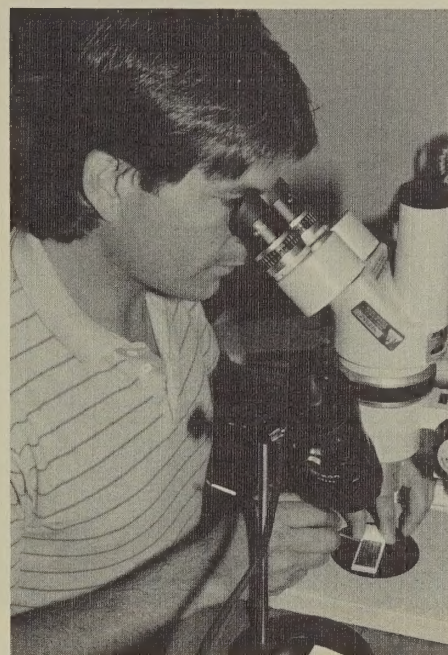
Christopher Gibson, petroleum geologist at the Anchorage District Office, says the study of these organisms is just one type of data used in the analysis of rocks and core samples to determine the stratigraphic sequence of geologic formations beneath the earth's surface.

"By looking at these little 'bugs,' I can tell the relative age of the rocks and the type of environment that they were formed in," says Gibson, who, like other micropaleontologists, refers to the organisms as 'time markers.'

Gibson began in March to process rocks and core samples, soaking them in mineral spirits to release the fossils. He has found as many as 300 specimens in one sample, all benthonic foraminifera, which inhabited the substrate under the ocean.

As a member of the Branch of Solids and Fluids in the Division of Minerals, Gibson's usual job is making subsurface geologic maps and cross sections of the Cook Inlet Basin and the oil and gas fields located on federal leases and lands. His interest in this type of research stems from his college days when he was involved in several U.S. Geological Survey cruises in California and Alaska.

"Although micropaleontology dates from the 1600s, the oil industry did not begin employing it until the 1920s," says Gibson. "Today there is scarcely an

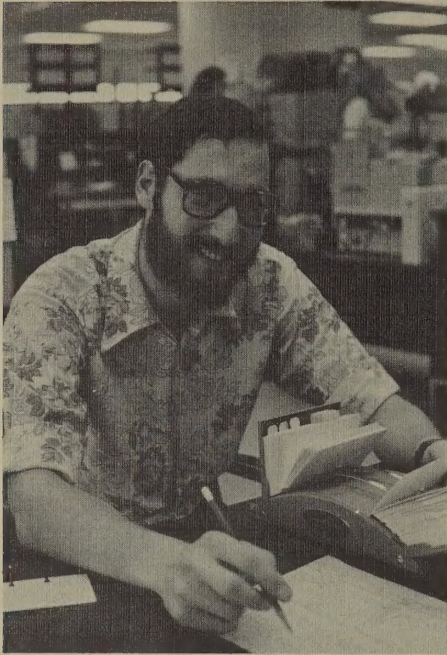


Chris Gibson

oilfield in the world where this systematic analysis is not standard practice." Armed with screens, sieves, glass slides, and a powerful microscope, Gibson, like others in his profession, works to unlock the story of the earth's formation.

"There are more than 30,000 known species of foraminifera," he says. "It can be fascinating to discover just how many different species and genera exist in one small sample. One has to be careful in correlating the type of organism to the rock, but it is possible to learn something of the environmental conditions that existed during the times these little creatures were alive from their shape, the way the shell was formed, and other features." His findings will be part of the larger resource analysis being performed by the Division of Minerals to determine whether there is sufficient oil and gas potential on the refuge to permit leasing and exploration.

Steve Pody Returns From His Travels Abroad



Steve Pody

In January 1984 former ASO timekeeper Steve Pody left his BLM job to travel to "the Middle East and parts unknown." After 14 months of traveling he's back with lots of stories to tell.

Pody spent the first four months of his trek in a Hebrew school in Israel. The school, called an "ulpan," requires its students to work four hours a day, six days a week, in an Israeli kibbutz (collective farm) and spend four hours

learning the Israeli culture, language, social system, and history. Each student is also "adopted" by an Israeli family to help them learn more about family life.

Last summer Pody bought a Eurail pass and spent two and a half months traveling throughout Europe. "I saw 16 countries and traveled 12,000 miles," says Pody. "I went from Israel to Narvik, Norway, above the Arctic Circle, to Helsinki, Finland, from Ireland to Sicily, and everywhere in between."

From there he went back to Israel to work on an archaeological dig of the town of Gamla, which was destroyed by the Romans in 67 AD. Pody says, "It was very exciting. I would dig, find something like a pot or coin, and know I was the first person to hold it in 1,917 years! We were housed in tents, lived rough, and worked hard; but I loved it. When the digging season closed I was the last foreign volunteer to leave."

After the dig finished in October, Pody went back to the kibbutz to continue his studies. He spent five more months as a volunteer before returning to the U.S.

"The people are friendly everywhere," says Pody. "Just don't read the newspapers because when you do, you expect terrorist attacks and bombings to be happening everywhere. One in every five people is in uniform and carrying a gun. Every citizen is required to spend time in the military at age 18. It's the only place in the world

where you can make a legal withdrawal from a bank carrying an M16. Israel itself has very little crime. The people rely more on the social system and depend on each other. It's a fascinating country!"

"About the size of Alaska's Kenai Peninsula, geographically Israel ranges from the snow covered Mt. Hermon in the north to the Dead Sea which is below sea level. There is also fantastic diversity in religion and race; and everywhere is history, history, history."

When asked what his future plans are, Pody said, "I plan to take the State Department test for working in a U.S. Embassy. I am also considering working for the Peace Corps in the Far East or India if there is an opportunity open. It's great being in Alaska again, but I love to travel. Another option I'm considering is a masters degree in archaeology at Hebrew University in Jerusalem. I plan to travel to Hong Kong and the Philippines this fall."

Pody is currently working as a miscellaneous documents examiner in ASO's Division of Mineral Resources.

Two phrases not often enough used:

"I could be wrong"

"I'm sorry"

State Selections Goes Fishing

ASO State Selections employees and friends recently gathered for the fourth annual deep-sea fishing trip. "It was a gorgeous, sunny day; and we caught lots of fish, including halibut, black bass, ling cod, and red snapper," said coordinator Marcia Walker.

The group of 24 chartered two boats to take them out. In a contest held by the group, Walker caught the biggest fish (a 77 lb. halibut); her husband, Leonard, caught the most fish (25); Rick Knudson caught the first fish; and three people won the "skunked" award.

Interchange Update

Input gathered from the public meetings held in June has been analyzed, and the issues requiring resolution are being identified. Draft legislative language responding to the public input are currently being prepared for consideration by the chief/director.

The Merit Promotion Plan

by Mary Zeiher

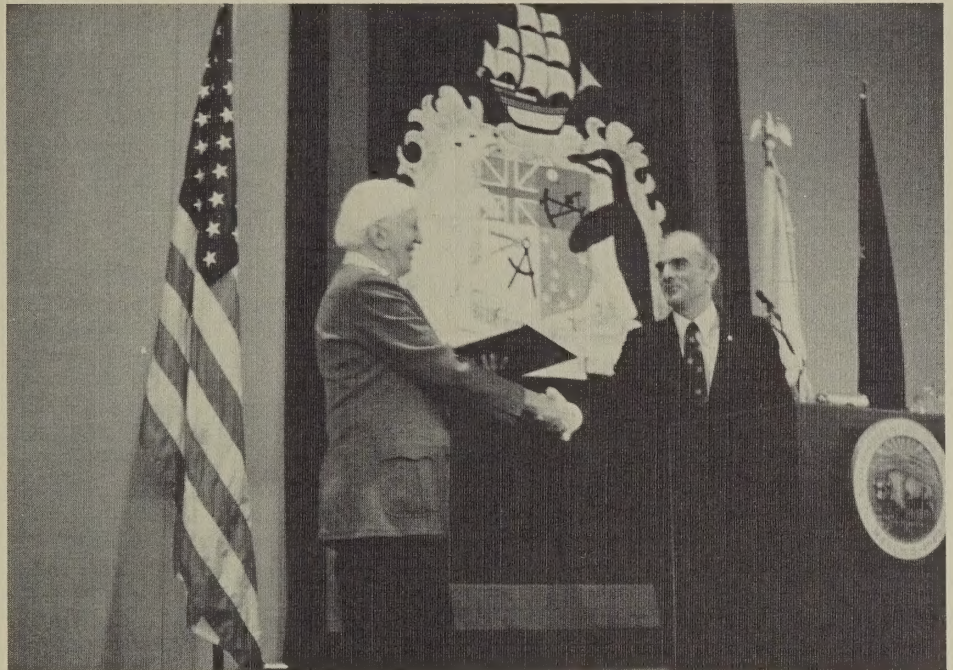
Each agency is required by 5 CFR, Part 335 to establish and administer a program designed to ensure a systematic means of selection for promotion according to merit. The Bureau Merit Promotion Plan (BLM Manual 1400-335) defines policies and procedures to be used for staffing positions where competition is required for promotional opportunities. The minimum contents of the vacancy announcement, area of consideration, application procedures, evaluation process, and other requirements are outlined by the MPP.

Each duty station has an official bulletin board or binder for current vacancy announcements to be posted. The review of vacancy announcements is your responsibility. If you are going on annual leave, military leave, extended training, etc., you should give your supervisor a written list of positions you are interested in prior to departure. If any positions on the list are advertised during your absence, your supervisor should make a reasonable attempt to contact you.

You are responsible for ensuring that all application materials are received by close of business on the closing date of the announcement. Requests for an extension may be granted if received prior to close of business on the closing date of the announcement. However, extensions should not be necessary except for unusual circumstances. When granted, extensions allow an additional five working days for receipt of application materials.

Once the announcement is closed, applications are rated against the appropriate qualification standard as specified by the Office of Personnel Management. Those applicants who meet the minimum qualifications and are also eligible for promotion are further screened against the Evaluation (ranking) Criteria identified on the vacancy announcement. These criteria are established by the selecting official and staffing specialist prior to advertisement. Once the evaluation process is complete, the best qualified candidates are referred to the selecting supervisor. The supervisor may select any candidate referred for consideration.

George Gustafson Receives 40 Year Pin



"Seeing a project through from beginning to end is what has made my job really worthwhile," says ASO's townsite patent specialist George Gustafson. Gustafson was awarded his 40-year pin by Secretary of Interior Hodel at a recent all-employee meeting.

"I came up with my family in 1947 to cruise timber for BLM in Alaska. The five-month detail extended to a 38-year assignment. I was promised when I came up that if we liked it here, we could stay on. At that time the BLM office consisted of a suite at the west end of the old federal building basement. The office was made up of two ladies who ran the land office, an area administrator, and a field examiner," he added.

"After my five-month detail was over, I was offered a job as district ranger with BLM at the old Civilian Conservation Corps camp on Elmendorf. I spent the next two summers chasing fires all over Alaska. In 1949 I became a land examiner in the lands branch. By this time there were several more BLM employees. In 1957 I became chief of the division of resources and in 1961 was appointed townsite trustee." Gustafson remained townsite trustee until 1984 when he was appointed townsite patent specialist.

"As townsite trustee I applied for patent to BLM for the people of the villages. Once I got title, I was able to give the people of the town title to their land. It's a very unique job. I was the only person with my job in the whole government system. The work was very challenging and interesting, and it kept me on my toes.

The most satisfying part is that I was working with the people; and I could see a project through from beginning to end and have happy, satisfied customers."

Congratulations, George on your 40-year pin!

There are various staffing options available that are an exception to the competitive procedures required by the Merit Promotion Plan. Among those are competitive appointment from an OPM certificate; career promotions; temporary promotions and details not to exceed 120 days; reassignment, promotion or change to lower grade in a position with no greater promotion potential than the last non-temporary position held; reinstatement to a

position equal to or lower graded than the last non-temporary grade held; and appointment of someone eligible for a special emphasis program, such as handicapped, 30 percent compensable veteran, or Veteran's Readjustment Act.

For additional information on the Merit Promotion Plan or other appointing authorities, please contact Mary Zeiher at 271-3180.

ACCOLADES

SPECIAL ACT AWARD

Rebecca Johnson, Miscellaneous Documents Examiner, ASO Division of Conveyance Management
Susan Erickson, Miscellaneous Documents Clerk, ASO Division of Conveyance Management

SUSTAINED SUPERIOR PERFORMANCE AWARD

Betty Chamberlain, Miscellaneous Documents Examiner, ASO Division of Conveyance Management
Dorothy Earls, Land Law Examiner, ASO Division of Conveyance Management
Michael Hogan, Land Law Examiner, ASO Division of Conveyance Management
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Janice McDowell, Land Law Examiner, ASO Division of Conveyance Management
Timothy Flynn, Cartographic Technician, ASO Division of Cadastral Survey
Dorothy Campbell, Land Law Examiner, ASO Division of Conveyance Management

QUALITY STEP INCREASE

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Stan Curtis, Land Law Examiner, ASO Division of Conveyance Management
Eve Heavner, Land Law Examiner, ASO Division of Conveyance Management

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Raymond Edgerly, Cartographic Technician, ASO Division of Operations
Claudia Harrod, Mail & File Clerk, ADO
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John Leeds, Land Law Examiner, ASO Division of Mineral Resources
Wyona Malatare, Supervisory Miscellaneous Documents Examiner, ASO Division of Operations
Robert Netherton, Student Trainee (Land Surveyor), ASO Division of Cadastral Survey
James Richardson, Deputy State Director, ASO Division of Mineral Resources (retired)

Mosquito Trivia (family Culicidae)

Summer is here and with it mosquito season. Did you know that:

--There are more than 3,000 species of mosquitos in the world.

--Only the female mosquito bites humans, animals and birds to to obtain the protein necessary for egg development.
(male mosquitos do not suck blood)

--The mosquito is responsible for more human deaths than any other creature in the world.

--Mosquitos are found just about everywhere in the world. They exist in mountainous areas, deserts, jungles and in the arctic.

--Mosquito saliva injected during the bite keeps the blood from clotting and leads to the itching and burning sensations.

--The mosquito goes through three stages before adulthood: eggs--larva--pupa.

In 1941 mosquito investigators in Stalinsk, Siberia found hibernating female mosquitos in the basements of old wooden houses and in pits where the vegetables were stored. Some were frozen to walls and ceilings but after careful thawing revived. (they must be invincible!)

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